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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 2, 2012

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MEMA RECOMMENDS SHELTER-IN-PLACE FOR SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE COUNTY COMMUNITIES

FRAMINGHAM, MA - Due to the eastward track of the plume from the industrial fire in Ghent, NY, located ten miles from the Massachusetts border, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is recommending that residents within 15 miles of the fire shelter-in-place. This is particularly important for citizens in the communities of Southern Berkshire County east and south of Alford and Great Barrington. The Commonwealth has dispatched personnel from the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Public Health, Department of Fire Services and National Guard to determine the impacts of the plume.

This precautionary action is consistent with the actions of the State of the New York and is recommended until the exact impact of the chemicals potentially in the plume can be determined by Public Health officials. Individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions may be especially vulnerable.

Sheltering-in-place is a standard protective action utilized in Emergency Management during an accident or event in which hazardous materials have been released into the atmosphere. The purpose is to create as airtight as possible enclosures to prevent exposure to hazardous materials.

The following are steps to be taken when instructed to shelter in place:

- Those located within the impacted area should immediately go indoors.
- Close and lock all doors and windows. Locking is preferred since it generally ensures that the door or window is shut tight.
- Turn off all air handling systems such as window fans, kitchen & bath exhaust fans, air conditioners, and other sources of outside air. Shut off clothes dryers and seal exhaust vents.
- Close the fireplace flue if it is not in use. (A structure with a burning fire in the fireplace is not a good candidate for sheltering-in-place.)
- Seal off any cracks that could cause leakage to the outside.
- Keep pets indoors.
- If you have livestock, shelter them. Provide them with stored feed and water from a covered source.
- Go to an above-ground room with the fewest windows and doors.
- If you are traveling in a motor vehicle, close the windows and air vents. Turn off the heater and air conditioner. Keep the radio tuned to an Emergency Alert Station.

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- Go inside a nearby building. If none is available, leave the area immediately.
- Continue to monitor media for official messages and instructions.
- Stay inside until officials say otherwise. Persons with respiratory conditions should not go out at all.

Citizens who have any questions should call 2-1-1, refraining from tying up local 9-1-1 lines with non-emergency calls

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and All Hazards Preparedness, go to the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema. Also, follow MEMA on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.